

UINTAH BASIN ADAPTIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (UBARM) LOCAL WORKING GROUP

Planning/update meeting

Date: Thursday, July 21, 2005

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Place: State & County Building, North Conference
Room

Members Present:

Brian Maxfield – UDWR

Debra Domenici – Kerr McGee

Dixie Sadlier – BLM VFO

Sherel Goodrich – USDA Forest Service

Shon McKinnon – Newfield Production Co.

Sarah Lupis – USU Extension

Rod Harrison – Duchesne County Commissioner

Dean Mitchell – UDWR

David Bailey – UFBA

Walt Donaldson – UDWR

Scott Chew – Landowner

Mike McKee – Uintah County Commission

Information Presented

Brian gave an update on the Strawberry Valley grouse. Rick is very happy with the Diamond Mtn. grouse; they initiated more nests than hens transplanted from other areas (27 of 34). Most have stayed in Strawberry Valley and have linked up with the resident population. 4 of 34 have died due to various reasons which is good compared to other years. 2 birds have traveled to Emma Park, but have since returned to Strawberry Valley. Also, a few have moved to Current Creek.

Brian also updated us on Anthro Mtn. birds. 11 adults (6 hens) have been radio-collared in the area. 5 hens initiated nests and 2 failed early in nesting season. Another was lost to avian depredation (holes in the nest). One nest had 8 chicks and another has likely hatched. They are involved in a brood study; they have put transmitters on a few chicks in the area.

Brian will be starting brood counts soon. Initially, brood count results are mixed. A few small and a few large broods from the same area. Brian speculates that the small broods may be from early nesting efforts that were impacted by a cold snap and the large ones are from re-nesting attempts.

Dean gave an update on UPCD science team activities. The team met on Tuesday. They are trying to determine how to monitor habitat projects throughout the state to understand if projects are making a difference in sage-grouse populations and in populations of other sagebrush steppe obligates. Many projects have already started and the team is trying to include them in monitoring efforts. The team has decided to adopt the TNC 5 S monitoring process that has been used

successfully in many places throughout the west. The team has begun to develop Integrity Tables. The hope is that the techniques agreed upon by this team will be used throughout the state so that things done in one area can be compared to other areas.

You are now on the web! Check it out: <http://www.usu.cnr.edu/cbc>

Brian gave an update on habitat projects. There will be a habitat project on the Ruple allotment, (located from state line to McCarrolls). The UDWR is working with SITLA and the Uinta Basin Grazers and the BLM. Small bird monitoring already in place. Chaining and aerating with reseeded in the sagebrush habitat in the fall. UDWR applied for funding from Intermountain West Joint Venture—the project ranked highest in the state so they are likely to get funding. Steve Brayton is working on a few others that are just in the planning phases around Blue and Diamond Mtns.

Walt Donaldson explained that rumor suggests that the Allen Smith GRP easement (10,000 acres) is likely the #1 easement in the country because of its size and importance to sage-grouse and big game. It is before the Quality Growth Commission to acquire a match for the NRCS funds. If it is funded, Walt suggested that the group attend a field tour that is likely to take place.

Discussion Highlights

The group discussed some of the potential methods that could be used to monitor wildlife populations. USU and the DWR are doing research in Rich County to try and develop cost-effective techniques to monitor wildlife populations in sagebrush steppe areas. Dean explained that we are currently using lek counts to measure sage-grouse populations but that it isn't always the most effective technique.

The Group discussed a SITLA land sale near Tabby Mtn. The block is 27,000 acres in size. There are a lot of grouse near there and that have come up to it. A private developer has offered the state \$30 million for the property. Mike M. provided a map of the area that the group reviewed. The property was once owned by the USFS but was traded to the state. SITLA will be coming up with a plan and one option will be to go through with the sale. They are also proposing that the DNR go to the legislature for a one-time funding package to allow SITLA to get money for schools, etc. while keeping the land in open space. The project/sale is in the planning stage. There will be a public meeting in Tabiona on the 26th and in Heber City on the 27th for those that want to attend.

The Group discussed including language in the mission statement about their place in the overall sagebrush steppe habitat planning initiative being conducted by the UPCD. Project developed in this group would send them to the Regional Team. Perhaps there could be some language that acknowledges that cooperation between the Regional Team and the local working group.

Follow-up Needed

Include Newfield Production Company in MOU and on cooperator lists.

Everyone to obtain signatures on MOU for next meeting.

Sherel to get USFS fire management plan to Sarah.

Steve Strong to get BLM fire management plan to Sarah.

Boyd K. to look into getting more information on trends in farming.

Mike M. to lend Sarah socioeconomic reports.

Brian to compile population trend, hunting trend information and send to Sarah. Also the updated hunting boundaries.

Group to review Section 1, with new language.

Sarah to work on Section 2 and send out before next meeting.

Actions Taken

Group approved 5/17/05 meeting minutes.

Group approved MOU.

Next meeting

Date: Thursday, September 15, 2005

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Place: State & County Building on Main Street in Vernal, UT, North Conference Room

Agenda:

Review Chapter 1, 2.

Review Integrity Tables for Uintah Basin area and discuss issues, objectives, and strategies.